

At page 38, line 6, after "cooled" insert: --Chilled water may also be provided by
perforated water jets 160 prior to the flattening step, as shown in FIGURE 28. --

In The Drawings:

Please replace FIGURE 28 with new FIGURE 28; reference numeral additions are circled in red.

In The Claims:

Please cancel Claims 15, 35, 39, 41, 42, 61, 62 and 65, without prejudice.

Please amend Claims 1, 14, 16, 18, 23, 38, 40, 60 and 63, as follows:

1. (Amended) A hot-fill process using a vertical form and fill machine for continuously preparing packaged food portions consisting of two or more different food items wrapped in a flexible film, comprising the steps of:

simultaneously and separately pumping each of the two or more food items to an extrusion location;

simultaneously and separately extruding each of the food items and longitudinally enclosing the food items in a tubular web of the film;

combining the[m] food items into a predetermined [the] food portion using a portion control method that varies the extrusion speed based on an amount of the food portion present, wherein the combined food items within the food portion retain their individual product